

Anxious by caroconcerta

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: F/M

Language: English

Characters: Eleven | Jane Hopper, Jim "Chief" Hopper, Mike Wheeler

Relationships: Eleven | Jane Hopper/Mike Wheeler

Status: Completed

Published: 2018-08-12

Updated: 2018-08-12

Packaged: 2022-04-23 02:26:51

Rating: Mature

Warnings: Underage

Chapters: 1

Words: 7,896

Publisher: archiveofourown.org

Summary:

El was anxious.

Anxious: experiencing worry, unease, or nervousness, typically about an imminent event or something with an uncertain outcome.

Yes, that was exactly how El was feeling now that she knew that she and Mike would be alone in the cabin together. She didn't really know exactly why she felt that way, but she did know it had something to do with the kiss they shared last month at the Snowball.

Anxious

It seemed like a typical night since locking up the Mind Flayer: El, once again hidden in the cabin that she had now spent 394 days and nights in, was alone, TV on, reading. She laid stomach-down on the couch, absently turning the pages of her dictionary while she waited for the commercials to end. Her feet hung off the couch, bouncing around in a motion that gave away her relaxed position.

It had been more than a month since she had seen Mike, 41 days to be exact. 41 days since she'd traced the curves of his cheeks with her eyes, felt the soft warmth of his fingers against her own, touched his silky mess of a hair; 41 days since his hands lightly held her around the waist, and her arms softly wrapped around his neck, feeling the soft nape of his neck. 41 days since their legs moved unsurely to the staccato rhythm that played in the winter-twinkling gymnasium; that night, his eyes held a kaleidoscope of emotions, and hers mirrored the same. 41 days since their lips touched and the world seized to be filled with darkness, monsters, and the fear that followed her.

41 days is a long time to be away from Mike, not that she was counting or anything.

Hopper kept her inside by order of Dr. Owens, as she was, as usual, in danger of being found out by the bad men. Another year of being stuck, but this time was different. This time she was confined, but not alone. This time, she wasn't in hiding, but in waiting. Mike knew she was alive, Lucas, Dustin and Will—they all knew she was alive. This time around, nothing would keep Mike and El from each other for long.

And to Hoppers defense, he did not try to separate them for long. After the Snowball, the best night of El's life, El settled down into the familiarity of quiet days in the cabin and began her routine of watching TV, chatting with Mike on the walkie-talkie, and begging Hopper upon his arrival home to let Mike visit. Within a month, right at the end of January, he gave in and agreed to a visit. The smile that El responded with was more than enough to melt Hoppers heart. This time around, he wouldn't hide her from the world. This was right for her, right for him, and right for Wheeler.

It was February 1st, the day that Mike was finally going to visit El. And as she lazed around on the couch, reading definitions of words, waiting for the hours to pass and evening to come, the loud beeping of morse code came onto the intercom. El stood to decipher the code.

AT

OFFICE

LATE

—HE

LEAVES

AT

8

PM

El swallowed and sat down again, grabbing her dictionary once more. She turned the pages of her dictionary, landing on a page she had read previously, thumbing a word she'd read many times before.

El was anxious.

Anxious: experiencing worry, unease, or nervousness, typically about an imminent event or something with an uncertain outcome.

Yes, that was exactly how El was feeling now that she knew that she and Mike would be alone in the cabin together. She didn't really know exactly *why* she felt that way, but she did know it had something to do with the kiss they shared last month at the Snowball.

El bolted up as she heard the distinct code knock on the door. She

walked over and manually opened all of the locks, nervous and taking her time. Her fingers jolted upon touching the cold metal locks, frosted by the snow outside. The chill was doubled as she whipped open the door, a gush of cold breeze hitting her face and closing her eyes.

But she opened her eyes just as quickly as she closed them, for she couldn't resist the sight in front of her.

It was Mike. He was finally here. Finally in her world, her home, her hiding place.

It was cold outside, the snow still covering most of the forest, and his cheeks looked very red against his pale skin. El looked at him in wonder. So much had changed in just the last month away from him. He was fourteen years old now, having celebrated his birthday right after Christmas. He must have grown once again, El thought, as she tilted her neck backwards to look up at him.

And then he smiled, and her thoughts went quiet.

“El.”

The timbre of his voice sounded so foreign yet so perfect coming from his tongue. She couldn't resist holding him for any longer, and launched into his arms. They wrapped their arms around each other, not moving from the porch, from the cool winter breeze. They were warm in each other's embrace.

“I have missed you so much”, Mike said.

“Me too” was El's reply.

While El was sweet and still in his embrace, Mike took a moment to analyze her as well. He felt her soft-curled hair against his cheek, realizing just how much he loved how it looked. He'd never seen a head so curly and so perfect. Her button nose was against his collarbone, her breath quiet but warm, causing his chilled skin to tingle and break out in goosebumps. Her pretty lilac shirt scooped around her delicate neck, and Mike gazed at her smooth skin. She had one freckle just on the back of her shoulder, and Mike couldn't

stop staring.

She was perfect. She was El. She was here.

They soon settled down onto the couch to chat. While it was obvious that they both were a bit unsure of what to do now, as Mike's leg bounced, and El played with her hair nervously, it was Mike who spoke first. He began talking about the party, how Dustin was still growling with his teeth, how they teased Max about her and Lucas kissing because her face went as red as her hair, how Will was creating a new mix tape with Jonathan, and lastly talking about Mike.

Mike spoke about their newest science experiment in Mr. Clarke's class. El smiled and listened to him as he spoke animatedly, relaxing immediately.

"...and then we had to cut into the stomach of the frog and measure the intestines. It was disgusting! Dustin started retching and—wait, El, where's Hopper?"

"He's working late tonight." She replied, looking straight into his eyes. His stomach flipped.

"Oh."

Silence, sweet, unspoken silence. Minds racing, hearts pounding, faces blushing, *electric* silence.

The mood had changed in the room. While they both really had no idea of what that meant, this time, it was El who made the second step forward of the night. El grabbed his hand and settled closer to him on the couch. Sides touching, his shaky leg against her still one. Warmth, shaky breath, eyes looking unblinkingly at one another. He laced his fingers together with hers. Their blushes matched as well as their hands fit together.

They were just looking at each other, innocent thoughts peppered with hot ideas. Lost in each other. They had time, something they had never had before. El licked her lips and Mike's eyes followed their motion.

Then El's eyes flashed with amusement, breaking the silence with new emotion.

“So, did Dustin puke?” El said, smile full of mirth.

Mike let go of the breath he hadn't known he was holding and smirked. “Oh, totally. It was disgusting.”

It was around 6:30pm when they both had settled into a comfortable embrace. Both of them were played across the couch, El's head resting on Mike's chest, while his arm was wrapped around her. She lazily traced shapes across his shirt, as some indistinct commercial once again played on the TV. The dictionary had been moved to the coffee table, and her eyes once again drifted to the word *anxious*.

“Hey Mike?” She looked up at him from under her lashes.

“Yeah?” He softly replied.

“Do I make you anxious?” She asked him seriously, her head falling forward and hair shielding her face, as if she had asked him something very slanderous. Her ears tipped red, reason unbeknownst to either her or Mike.

He stared at her, confused. “Anxious? Why would you think you make me anxious?”

She looked down, her voice just above a whisper, “Because you make me feel anxious.”

Mike turned her in his arms, gripping her shoulders tightly, trying to bring her to look at him. Her eyes were still down, suddenly very embarrassed and unsure of why she even asked such a silly thing. He grabbed the remote and turned the TV off, and gave her a few seconds to breathe. She was still in her position, and Mike tentatively put his hand under her chin and tilted her head up. Her eyes were filled with fear, but not the type of fear he'd seen in her face before when they were dealing with the bad men, or the monsters from the Upside Down. There was an uncertainty to this fear, a confusion, and a look of pleading for him to understand. He moved closer and

grasped her hands again.

“Why do I make you feel anxious?” He asked her calmly, reverently, his hands holding hers tightly.

She licked her lips. “When you kissed me at the Snowball I felt anxious.”

His heart sank. “You didn’t like it?”

“No, I liked it! I liked it a lot!” She stared into his eyes.

“I’m confused, El.” He pleaded with her to help him understand, his eyebrows scrunching in a way that was so adorably *Mike* that she couldn’t help what words came out of her mouth next.

“I also feel anxious right now” She blurted, confusing him even more. He pursed his lips and her heart flew at only that simple action. His lips were so red and she couldn’t help staring as they moved. She wanted to—she wanted to do something, but she didn’t understand what. She didn’t understand the words. She didn’t understand how to convey this moment.

He let go of her shoulders and grabbed her hands again, holding on tightly, trying to comfort her in what he thought was a moment of her distress. “Why are you anxious no—” He began.

“Because we are alone.” She finished.

Hushed but strong words. Eyes flickering up to meet his, eyes not leaving his, eyes penetrating his soul, telling him all that he needed to know, telling him the words she could not convey, all in a gaze. Those same eyes traveling just lower to his lips again, and watching as they moved into a small pucker of surprise.

She may not know what to say, but she would sure as hell try to say it.

Oh.

Mike blushed. Understood. Licked his lips and saw her eyes flicker

down again. He'd noticed before, but he didn't understand what her stare meant.

Now he did, and now *he* was feeling anxious.

They both looked down, facing each other on the couch, their knees touching. Mike's hands were sweaty, and he wondered if El had noticed. He swallowed hard again, trying to process what she said. Trying to figure out what to say back. Trying to...figure out what to do next. *Does she mean what I think she means? Does she want to—*

"Mike?" El persisted.

"Yeah?" Mike's startled voice cracked, his eyes meeting hers again.

"Why do you kiss me?" She whispered. He looked straight at her, a mixture of embarrassment and astonishment on his face.

"Seriously?" He responded sarcastically, forgetting that she was still learning social cues, embarrassing her. El's face shifted to embarrassment, her cheeks reddening gloriously. The color almost made him not notice her pulling away, but he grabbed her just before she'd stood.

"Sorry, I forget that you don't know all these things—"

"These things?" Her voice soft but irritated.

"Romance and kissing and stuff" He said.

"I know what a kiss is" She huffed, "I just don't know why you kiss me."

"Well..." Mike stalled, his cheeks now matching hers in color, "There are many reasons—"

"Such as?" El pressed, her voice now curious, her eyes locked onto his. Her stare had always been intimidating, but this particular stare made his heart flutter. Such sweet curiosity.

"Well like when, when a man likes a woman, he will kiss her. Not the way you like Dustin, or I like my sister, it's a different like. The type

of like where you feel things for them. You love them so you want to kiss them and stuff. You want to be with them, and hold them, and touch them, and think about them all the time, and want to do other things with them. I don't want that with my sister, that is disgusting and gross! And I hope you don't like Dustin like that, because that would be a huge problem for us and I don't want to lose you and I don't think I could—" El placed a hand over his mouth, thankfully stopping his nervous ranting. She smiled at him as his face started to rival the color of a tomato. El thought it made his freckles even prettier.

"Other things?" El persisted.

"Huh?" Mike replied stupidly.

"You said people who like each other do other things?" El responded, "What other things?"

Mike groaned. She just *had* to ask about that part of his rambling. "Yeah. More than kissing. Like touching and—and other stuff." He couldn't say it.

"Mike." Her eyes leveled with his, her eyes a reminder to not ever piss her off. "Friends don't lie."

A pause, a sigh, and a resigned Mike shakily let go of her hands, one going behind his neck.

"Other stuff is like having sex.." He trailed off and waited. When he got no response from her, he finally looked up. He wasn't sure what he expected her reaction to be, but it wasn't the confused look on her face.

"Sex? What is sex?"

Mike groaned even louder. His face looked pained, and El grabbed his hands in worry.

"Mike? Are you okay?" She looked at him concerned. Her innocent face melted his heart. She had no idea what she was doing right now, and that thought stirred something within even lower than usual. She was the only person that could come off being *more innocent* when

asking her boyfriend about sex.

“Yeah, I’m fine... Sex is—sex is a *physical activity* you do to show your love for your partner. You do it when you’re older—”

“Do you want to sex me?”

“Oh god...” He buried his face in his hands, his face redder than a tomato. El, for some reason, felt warm all over. She grabbed his hands and uncovered his face, staring straight at him.

“Mike... Friends tell the truth.” She hit him again with that stupid saying. He regretted making that stupid rule when he was seven years old. It certainly shouldn't apply when your naive girlfriend was innocently asking if you wanted to have sex with her.

He gulped. He gave in to her. He nodded.

“But that is something for when we are older! *Much older!* I don't want it to happen until we are both older and ready!” He squeaked out quickly, never feeling more embarrassed in his life. She smiled, and suddenly her scrunched up in contemplation.

“Wait—you kiss me.”

He looked at her confused.

“When you love someone you kiss them...” She thought out loud, “So you love me?”

Mike, with a permanent red face, made an exasperated noise.

“Well, yeah!” He blurted out, slightly annoyed she even had to ask because it was so blatantly obvious. But mostly his irritation was from the fact that his face was now permanently red from the confession. This is not exactly the way Mike had envisioned telling her, with her being unsure of him and having to ask.

But his mask of annoyance dropped as she smiled, blushing now too.

“I love you too.” Her smile broke him, as it always did, reminding him of how lucky he was to have found her that day in the forest.

Mike huffed and looked down. They both smiled through their embarrassment, happy beyond belief at this silly little step they accidentally crossed on the path of understanding each others anxiety.

By 7:15pm El and Mike had moved into her bedroom. She wanted to show him her new setup, with brand new clothes that Nancy had bought for her with Hopper, her new Ghostbusters poster, and the drawings will had given her dotted around the walls. Unbeknownst to El, this made Mike very nervous.

"Why don't you want to sit on my bed?" El offered him, her hand gesturing towards the old bed.

Mike cleared his throat. "Um, El, I think I'll just stand instead."

El sat on the bed suddenly, a look of confusion on her face. "Why?"

"Because El, it's not appropriate." His voice was quiet and pained, his eyes pleading with her to understand. Unfortunately for him, she did not understand, and she did not appreciate being left in the dark.

"Appropriate? Why not appropriate?" She looked at him indignantly.

He sighed, "Because we could start kissing or something—"

Oh, thats it? "So?"

"And it's not appropriate—"

"Mike. Sit." She patted the spot next to her. Her eyes were firm. He was not saying no.

With her body relaxed against the bed, her shirt shifting only slightly up so he could see the sliver of skin on her stomach, Mike knew he was a goner.

He sat next to her, their knees hanging off, thighs touching. She grabbed his hands.

"Why don't you want to kiss me?" She suddenly asked.

He groaned. "It's not like I don't want to kiss you, I definitely do. But I don't want to pressure you—"

"Pressure me?"

"You said earlier that when I kissed you it made you anxious." He clarified.

She thought for a second, choosing her words. "Yes, anxious. Good anxious."

He looked up at her. "Good anxious?" He said, confused.

She smiled. "Warm, tingly, nervous. Anxious."

He gulped and looked off, embarrassed. "Oh."

"What about you?" She asked him.

"Umm..." He stammered. "Good. It feels good. Warm and tingly." His face would stay at an alarming shade of red for the entire night, it seemed.

She smiled, her eyes twinkling. "Warm and tingly."

Her stare was so sweet and warm that Mike had to look away, his body already warmed up by all that was her. He felt her shift closer, and he looked up. Suddenly, her face was right next to his. Her eyes were dark, her lips softly open, breathing him in. He could feel her hand roaming up his arm, delicately touching him, making him shiver. His eyes fluttered and then opened again at her sudden breath near his cheek.

"Mike, I feel anxious." Her eyes fluttered closed.

He couldn't help himself and closed his eyes too, closing the distance and sealing their third kiss.

Their third kiss was soft and tentative, testing the waters in their private environment. Their forth kiss followed quickly after, similar in touch and design. They broke away then, looking at each other,

and smiling.

As El went in for their fifth kiss, he met her halfway. This was new, *very new*. This time, El gasped as Mike held his face to her longer, and sucked on her bottom lip. They parted briefly only for him to move in just as quickly and do it again. This time, she did the same to his top, sucking lightly; his breath hitched, and the hand that was holding hers went to her neck, pulling her closer.

El turned her body completely to him now, her legs crisscross, and Mike followed. They disengaged for only a split second before Mike swooped in again. He angled her neck back and pulled her body towards his, trying to get closer to her. She, in turn, grabbed onto his shoulders.

Somewhere around their 20th kiss, not that they were counting, El felt Mike's tongue on her lips. Surprised, she gasped, and Mike backed off quickly, only to be pulled back by El. She liked whatever that was and wanted to do it again, and so this time it was her tongue that reached out to him. El quickly caught on, surprise being replaced with excitement, as their tongues circled each other. Small licks and bites, tentative sucks and touches followed. El decided she quite liked this type of kiss. In fact, she liked it much more than the others she'd shared with Mike. With every swirl of his tongue, her heart beat faster. With every little nip at her mouth, she wanted him even closer. Every little gasp he made, or hitch of breath, she wanted to learn what caused it. She wanted to perfect this, and make it last forever. Make this feeling last forever.

El moved her hands from Mike's chest to his hair and tugged him forward. He groaned, and she felt electrified. She did it again, harder, and he did the same thing, kissing her stronger. Their position soon became an annoyance to both of them, and as they fumbled around trying to find a more comfortable position El pulled him forward and dragged him on top of her. Surprised, Mike broke their kiss and looked up at her. His breathing was fast, his hair a mess, his face red. His eyes looked at her *hungrily* she decided. She liked this. She felt warm and tingly.

"El, maybe we should stop?" He pleaded with her, looking at her like he wanted to do anything but stop.

“Why?” She responded, just as breathless. She grabbed him and tried to pull him closer, but he resisted. “I like this.”

He rolled his eyes, “I do too, obviously. But maybe we should slow down?”

“384 days.” She said, looking at him seriously. “Slow enough.”

He looked down at her, his face serious, trying his best to make a well-rounded decision. He knew Hopper would be home soon, but he also had the girl he’d been waiting for for over a year in his arms, wanting to be with him. He didn’t want to pressure her, or make her do something she didn’t understand, but he also felt so strongly about her it was hard to hold back.

El decided for them, in the end. She drew her face close, and whispered in his ear, so sweetly, and he was done for.

“Mike, make me more anxious, please.”

Someday he’d teach her how to better use that word, but for now, that’s all he wanted to hear from her.

With a deep groan, he settled on top of her, one hand behind her neck and the other holding him up, as he captured her lips with undeniable lust. Sure, they were young, but their feelings had matured over time and now was the time to make up for it. She wrapped her arms around his neck and pulled him closer, and he settled between her hips.

Suddenly, they were closer than they’d ever been; their hips weren’t touching, but were within inches of another. They could feel the warmth of each other’s bodies, mixing with one another, as their lips did the same. They were caught up in this, feasting on each other, only taking breaks from each other’s lips to breath kisses down each other’s necks and face.

They were feeling things they had never felt on each other before, like the rise and fall of El’s chest into Mikes, the goosebumps that trailed up Mikes neck as she grazed her hands down it, and the soft skin that peeked out below Eleven’s shirt. Mikes hand drifted from

her neck down to her hip, touching the sliver of skin that lied between her jeans and shirt, tentatively touching. She arched her back in response, pulling his chest closer to hers. They both moaned into each other's mouths. She shifted her chest to follow a new feeling there, a tingling along her chest she'd never felt before. It was like an itch that felt good, and she wanted nothing more than for Mike to come closer and relieve the itch.

Their upper bodies melted together now, their warmth radiating off of one another. They attacked each other with wild abandon, their tongues intertwining with insatiable need that neither of them really understood. Mike grabbed onto El's hip harder, taking a quick breath before diving in again. She moaned in response, her grip onto his back bunching up his shirt. She privately appreciated his body while he sucked on her neck, her eyes fluttering at the feeling.

The warmth grew stronger in both of their bodies, and they instinctively shifted even closer. Mike's hand started to drift upwards and under El's shirt, only slightly. Her skin was soft and warm, and spurred him on even more. He shifted his hips closer, the ache becoming stronger—

“HEY KID, OPEN THE DOOR! THE WHEELER KID BETTER NOT BE HERE STILL—”

The both bolted off of and stared at each other in horror. Their faces red, their hair complete disasters, clothes disheveled... *They were so fucked.*

“SHIT!”

El threw her door open, Mike following, and grabbed anything and everything that belonged to him, and ran back into her room.

“Shit, shit, shit, I’m going to die!” Mike panicked.

El was much more composed upon hearing her dad’s sudden roar.

She had grown accustomed to his booming voice, and usually appreciated that she would always know he's coming. Right now, however, she did not appreciate it at all.

"Mike, calm down." El pushed calmly.

"Calm down? Hopper is going to kill me! Jesus Christ!" Mike pulled his hair and paced around quickly.

He swallowed and looked around.

"I need to hide. He cannot find me. He's gonna kill me, he's gonna kill me, he's gonna kill me..." Mike spiraled, still pacing.

"KID! I KNOW YOU HEARD ME! OPEN UP!" Hopper pounded again on the front door, this time making both El and Mike jump.

El thought of an idea.

"Closet." She pointed. Mike stopped, looked at it and then her and knew exactly what she meant. They'd been in this situation before, just reversed. Why hadn't he thought of this? It was like *déjà vu* when she was in his house.

He ran over with all of his stuff, holding his shoes, breathing hard, and she grabbed the door behind him.

"I need to get out of here without him knowing." His eyes pleaded.

"Promise. I'll figure it out." She nodded, and closed the door, leaving Mike in the darkness.

With a pop, creak and *schwoop*, the door was unlocked. Hopper opened it to see an El standing in front of him, body steadfast but eyes obviously nervous. He stared at her suspiciously.

"What took you so long to open the door, kid?" He shook the snow off his boots, tapping them against the door hinge.

"I... I was in the bathroom." She eventually said, her eyes shifting to anywhere but him.

“The bathroom, huh?”

“I was... I was... I had to go really bad!” Her voice screeched, his face shifting into a grimace.

“Okay kid, spare me the details.” He said, uncomfortably. He put his hat down on the table, and El relaxed a bit. “How was your visit with the kid?”

She gave him a small, tentative smile, “It was nice.”

“Uh huh. And when did he leave?”

“He left at 8pm. Promise.” El looked into Hoppers eyes, willing him to believe.

“Hmm.” He continued, “That’s strange, I didn’t see him on my way in on his bike.”

She swallowed.

“He didn’t bring his bike; he walked through the forest.”

“The forest? Why?”

“So that nobody could spy on him coming in, just in case.”

When did she get so quick at lying?

Hopper grunted and nodded towards the fridge.

“Did you eat?” He asked her.

“Yes. We ate.”

“Good, I did too. At the station.” He walked toward her, stopping right in front of her, forcing El to look up at him.

“Look kid, I’m glad you had a good time, but you know that this can’t happen all the time, right? It’s not safe.”

“I know. But nothing happened. Nothing will happen. I promise.” She looked up at him, willing him to understand.

His eyes crinkled and he gave her a small smile.

“I know, kid. This isn’t a prison anymore, either. I’m glad you saw Mike.” He put his hand on her shoulder.

“Do you want to watch something?” He asked her.

She licked her lips and turned her head towards her bedroom.

“Let me change into PJ’s first?”

He nodded and she practically ran off towards her room.

Shit. Shit. Shit. Shitshitshitshitshitshitshitshit.

I am so fucked.

How the hell will I get out of here? Hopper is going to find me and I’ll never be able to see El again, never be able to hug her, or hold her, or kiss her..

Shit.

“Mike!” The door suddenly burst open. Mike squinted as his eyes became accustomed to the light again.

“El! Did Hopper find out?” He whispered frantically. He suddenly had a terrible feeling that Hopper was right outside, ear to the door, just waiting for Mike to make a mistake.

“No, he didn’t.” El said matter-of-fact, sitting down on the bed and starting to take off her socks.

“So what do we do?”

“I have an idea,” El said, grabbing one side of her sleeve and pulling her arm out of it. “Hopper takes a shower at night—”

“El, what are you doing?” Mike gulped, leveling with her.

Jesus.

Christ.

She was taking off her clothes in front of me.

El's eyes fluttered to him, confused. "What do you mean?" She pulled her arm out of her sleeve and grabbed the bottom of her top.

Mike's eyes widened.

"El!" His startled voice stopped her movements. "You're—You're taking off your clothes...?" He stated as if it was a question. El tsked as she pulled her top off. He quickly averted his eyes, turning towards the wall sparkled with Wills' drawings. He heard her feet shuffling closer to him, and her top dropping to the ground. He sucked in a strong breath.

He didn't turn around though.

"Yes, I am changing into my PJ's. Why?"

Mike gulped.

"Remember when you tried to take of Benny's shirt in front of Lucas, Dustin and I, and we all stopped you?" She nodded. "That's because you should only take off your clothes in private. Or around someone you are...intimate with.

"Intimate?"

"You know...someone you'd want to do *other things with*." He rasped. "When you're ready." He added quickly.

"But you want to do other things with me...can't we be intimate?"

Dear god have mercy on my soul.

"El...of course we can, but, I don't want you to feel embarrassed."

"Embarrassed? Is my body embarrassing?" Her voice cracked

suddenly, on the verge of tears. Mike recognized that voice and turned around, bare-chested El-be-damned. Suddenly she did feel embarrassed. What was wrong with her body? She started to pull her shirt back on and Mike's eyes widened.

"No! That's not what I mean!"

"I don't get it. You don't want to see my body, my body is embarrassing?" Her eyes looked sad, and Mike felt like a Grade-A mouthbreather.

"God, no, you're wrong El." Mike groaned, "I definitely want to see your body, but that's something we should do when it's right. When we are older. When we are alone." He tentatively stepped towards her, wanting to comfort her but also very freaked out at the amount of skin she was about to show, and how he was reacting to it. He shifted a bit in his pants, hiding his obvious discomfort that seemed to have luckily gone unnoticed by El. He stopped just a few feet from El, who started at him timidly, unsure of what to think now. He felt horrible for making her seem embarrassed, and was just about to forsake his own embarrassment and go to her to comfort her when a powerful flicker of determination crossed her face and she now stepped towards him.

Shirt haphazardly put on, her stomach completely bare, enough skin and movement and *El* to make Mike shiver as she neared him.

"But we are alone." El stared directly at him. In front of him. Eyes bold, too much.

"Hopper is in the next room." He tried to reason with her as her eyes slowly bewitched him.

"But he's not here with us." She persisted, biting her lip. She stepped forward again, this time inches away from Mike. He could feel her breath on his cheek, as her lips ghosted along his flesh.

"B-but he could hear us." He was losing control, giving in to her. His hands went around her bare waist, feeling the warmth, reveling in the softness of her peach-white skin.

"He won't." She said simply, and ran her hands around his waist and landed on his upper back, pushing him slightly so that his lower back was pressed against something. He did not care to look at what it was. He was completely entranced by El.

He pretended it was to keep her at bay, his hands there to balance her, to give her support, and a million other excuses, but the truth was he desperately wanted to touch her. And as his hands moved a bit further up, his mouth moving closer to hers, he suddenly heard a sharp noise behind him, startling him.

And then she was gone. Next to him, but not in his hands. Opening up her dresser drawer, grabbing pajamas, and smirking at him in a knowing way that he did not know El was capable of doing. Or maybe she didn't know what she was doing. Maybe it was in his head, maybe she had no idea what she was doing. *I mean, she didn't know what sex was, and she was about to undress in front of him, and that meant she was going to be naked in front of him, which means no clothes, and she didn't know what that did to him—*

"Mike." She pulled him out of his whirlwind of thoughts with a sweet smile. "It's okay Mike." She said pointedly. She moved toward him and gave him a kiss on the cheek and before he could even respond she moved back towards the bed.

She is going to be the death of me.

And so Mike did what any fourteen year old boy would do when given the opportunity to see the girl of his dreams strip: he watched. Unabashedly, without blinking, in amazement, as she quickly and daintily took off pieces of her clothing, bit by bit.

One.

By.

One.

He watched as her hands slowly pulled her shirt back up and over her long, lovely neck, and left her in the smallest of sports bras. He

licked his lips, as her hands grazed her tiny tummy, moving and hooking her fingers to the straps of her jeans on her hips. His heart skipped a beat as she shimmed out of them, his eyes following her hands as they traced down her legs. He still averted his eyes though as she bent over and gave him a view that was *too much* for him *too soon*. He blinked finally as she kicked off the rest of her jeans, following her small fingertips as the curve of her back went upright again once more. He licked his lips. As she stood again, he watched her every move, relishing in every curve that came into view. His eyes followed the plane of her stomach, to the curve of her chest, up the length of her graceful neck, pausing for a second on her freshly-kissed lips.

How he wished Hopper was not home, so they could go back to being in bed. But he was home, and so Mike did not move from his position, and Mike shifted uncomfortably, and Mike turned his eyes away as she moved closer to him and took clothes from her dresser.

Her dad is right outside. Her dad will kill me. God, she is beautiful.

“Mike? What’s wrong?”

His eyes snapped to her, a look of concern on her face.

She doesn’t even get it. If Hopper does not kill me, she will.

He turned away, and shook his head to clear his mind. He couldn’t look at her and think about surviving the night at the same time.

“Umm.. You were saying you had a plan?” He tried to pull it together.

“Yes. Hopper takes showers at night. Right before bed.” Mike could barely see her out of the corner of his eye, but he could hear her opening and closing her drawers.

“Okay.” Mike had no idea what she was talking about. All he was thinking of is how soft her skin was and how he wanted to bury his hands in her hair.

“So... we can sneak you out while he is in the shower!” She said, excitedly! More ruffling of noises. A fumbling of buttons. Mike turned

towards the closet, his brain semi-working now.

"That will definitely work! How long until you think that will happen?" He asked hopefully.

"Well, we watch TV for at least an hour first."

"An *hour*?!"

"Sometimes an hour and a half."

Mike banged his head against the closet door. More shuffling sounds, but at this point he was too depressed to wonder what El was up to.

"My mom is going to kill me."

"Mike" El whispered.

Much closer than he expected.

Right into his ear.

Tickling him, caressing him. Making him shiver.

"Y-yes?" He stuttered. Her sheer proximity messed with his mind.

"*Mike*." She said again, more forcefully, making him turn around. She had somehow cornered him against the wall, the small thing she was.

She looked absolutely adorable, in red polka dot pajamas, and he couldn't help but smile. The sudden change in character confused her but she continued nonetheless.

"It'll be fine, Mike. I won't let anyone hurt you." She stared into his eyes. "I promise."

Her eyes. He couldn't escape her gaze. Not that he wanted to.

"Promise." He bent down and she was there before he could even consider that she had been in here way too long for it to seem normal.

Her lips were like a drug to him. Her lips pillows against his own, her

mouth sweeter than any honey he'd ever tasted. Her breath was swallowed by his own, intoxicating, debilitating, intoxicating. She smelled like wintered cinnamon, and he would do anything to keep that scent with him forever. And the small noise she made as he nibbled at her bottom lip, a light and airy whimper that hummed along his own lips, was the most beautiful sound he'd ever heard.

She was too much for him to handle, mind and body.

And as suddenly as she had pulled him in to this intoxicating world of kisses, skin and polka dots, she was pulling away, smiling.

"See you in an hour, Mike. I'll be back when Hopper turns on the water!" Her smile anything but nervous. She was teasing him.

Hopper? Who's Hopper again?

One hour, six minutes, and thirty-two seconds is how long it took before Hopper headed to the restroom for a shower. That's how long Mike hid in the closet, waiting to not get killed by Hopper. One hour, seven minutes, and twenty-eight seconds was how long it took for El to slam the door of her room open, surprising him not only with the fact that he hadn't seen her use her powers in *months* but also because she practically pulled out his arm socket when she reached him.

"Mike, we have to go now!" She pulled my hand, dragging Mike out of her room. He vaguely heard the dull sound of the shower as she pulled him through the living room and quickly unlocked the door.

They walked down the steps and to the back where he had placed his bike. Luckily, Hopper hadn't seen it before.

This was all rushed, and for good reason. He was so late, his mom was going to kill him, and if Hopper came out now he would be double dead. He went to move onto his bike, silently cursing the long bike ride he'd have to endure in the cold. Wishing he didn't have to leave.

Yeah, he didn't want to leave, he realized. He really, *really* did not want to go.

He turned around, holding his bike, and looked at El. Her eyes somber, sparkling as bright as the stars in the night sky, her breath cold frosted in the dark. It was dark, very dark in fact, but she was light and sad and small and suddenly right next to him, inches from him, looking at him the same way he was looking at her. Tight lips, just holding it together; his finger lighter than ever touching her shoulder as her hairs raised from the chilled wind. Their eyes danced, her fingers finding his.

“El...”

She looked at him, slowing down. She looked at him, analyzing his face, searching his eyes.

He gave her a sad smile. “Time to go then, yeah?” He looked down, and hopped onto his bike. El coughed.

“Yeah...it is.” She stepped forward towards him.

He gave her a short laugh. “I’m guessing Hopper won’t let this happen any time soon again, huh?”

She stared at him, sadly. Her expression breaking Mike.

“Yeah,” He croaked. “Yeah.”

She grabbed his hand.

“I miss you.”

Yeah.

“Yeah.” *I miss you too.*

Fingers intertwined.

“I love you.”

“Yeah. Me too.” *I think I've loved you since the day I found you. What about you?*

Their eyes locked, and as if they both were the perfect match to one

another, both met in the middle. Their lips met and parted softly, the cold air mingling with their hot breath. El let out a shuttered breath, her eyes clenched together, her hands moving to his neck. She was sad, already lonely to be losing him. Mike pressed further into her, his hands holding onto the crux of her neck softly but firmly. He already missed her so much.

Their time was limited, and Mike pulled away, their eyes closed and their breaths soft.

“I gotta go.” *Tell me I can't leave.*

She stepped away. *I wish more than anything that you could stay.*

Their hands dropped.

“Okay.”

He hopped onto his bike, gave her one final sad smile, and started to pedal away. It felt like ages watching him and his bike crunch through the snow, his silhouette growing smaller and smaller. El didn't know why she felt so sad; she finally had Mike again, and they had done more together than they ever had done before; but for some reason, she felt even more empty than usual.

She felt strange, and sad, and cold.

She'd cried for herself many times in the lab, she'd cried when she thought she'd never see Mike again. She cried when she thought she'd died, but after tonight, she was crying because of the life she *wished* she could have with Mike. A life where she didn't have to hide him in her room, wait for him month after month. She wished more than anything right now to be a normal girl, who didn't have to worry about being found. Who could go outside, play in the snow, get ice cream with him. Christmas at the Wheelers, Thanksgiving at the Byers, meet Erica Sinclair, help Dustin find change for the arcade...She wished for more. And she knew that she also couldn't have it. And she didn't know how to get it even if she could.

And as she turned to walk up the porch, she saw Hopper looking at her, his expression indistinguishable.

She had tears in her eyes, though. Her emotions were worn on her sleeve, immediately shifting Hopper's. His voice was soft as she passed him.

"Kid..." He said as she pushed up the stairs.

"I'm sorry." She mumbled, sniffing from the cold and so much more. Hopper closed the door behind them and as she walked to her room he softly grabbed her shoulder. Her head hung low as he turned her around. She refused to look at him, drops falling to the ground, emotions overwhelming her in a way she'd never felt before.

"I'm not mad." Hopper whispered to her gently. "I'm definitely a bit worried that you are too close, and unhappy that you lied to me. But...I get it kid."

She sniffed softly in response, his words doing much to appease her anguish.

A few minutes of silence were then broken by Hopper's next words. "Hey. Do you know what February 14th is?"

She looked up at him then, confused.

"February 14th?"

"Yes. It's Valentine's day."

"Valentine's day?"

"Yes." He walked her to the kitchen and sat her at the table. He grabbed two eggo waffles and a carton of ice cream, and began spooning out ice cream onto each waffle.

She sat silent.

"Do you know what Valentine's day is, El?" He sat down and gave her a plate, eggo waffle a la carte.

She shook her head.

"It's a special day. A holiday that you share with someone special" He paused. "Someone you love."

She looked at him curiously. Was he hinting...?

"Mike can come over and see you that day."

No.

Way.

"Seriously?!" El practically screamed in happiness.

"Yes." He coughed to hide his smile. "You're a good kid. You deserve a good kid in your life."

A crooked smile versus a blinding, pearly-white beam. Pure happiness.

His smile fell. "But until then you are grounded." He deadpanned.

Her smile fell.

"You and your little boyfriend need to learn how to be more conspicuous. I could hear his voice from inside your room." He chastised.

Her face reddened.

"Nothing happened. I swear." *Although it kind of did.*

"I believe you. But you lied to me and hid a boy in your room. You have to understand there are punishments for your actions." He said harshly.

Her eyes glued to the ground, she nodded.

"But there are also compromises I will make because I love you. Two weeks kid." He took his final bite of eggo and grabbed his plate, stood up, ruffling her hair as he shuffled to put it in the sink, and then sauntered away.

"Valentine's Day!" He enunciated. "Look it up kid!" He shouted down

the hall.

El was left completely gobsmacked.

No, this certainly was not prison anymore. There were rules, and punishments, and she was stuck inside, but she was not alone. She wasn't excited about being grounded, but really, she basically was grounded every day. She knew as well as he did that being grounded was barely a punishment.

Two weeks. Two weeks until she got to see Mike again.

Now all she had to figure out was what the heck Valentine's day was.

Author's Note:

This was originally posted on fanfiction.net and I took it down because I hated the direction I took it in. I didn't like how much I sexualized the characters originally and they didn't feel realistic anymore. So for now I've rewritten it a bit and am considering it a one-shot. I MAY write another chapter, but please treat it as a one shot for now since I struggle completing works as I usually end up hating what I write and thinking it's not good enough at conveying the original idea. Oh the woes of being a perfectionist.

Anyways, enjoy!